A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thurſday, June 23. 1709.

IN my laſt I gave you the Generals of Trade; I am now to deſcend to Particulars, and examine the Heads, as I laid them down to you by Way of Preliminary.

I am upon the Subject of Commerce, as it is generally conſider'd, and the firſt, I laid down to ſpeak of, was that of *People*— And this comes very opportunely to ſpeak to, while the Queſtion ſeems particularly laid before us, in our receiving and ſuccouring the poor Proteſtant *Palatine* Refugees that are come over to us— A Thing, I know, we ſeem already to murmur at, and ſome are very diligent to raiſe Diſcontents among us about them— As that they will ſtarve our Poor, rob the Manufacturers of their Bread, and help to impoveriſh us.

To enter more nicely into this Article; and before I attempt to mention what ſhould or what may be done with them, I think, 'tis very needful to examine a little, *what we mean*, when we ſay, that People are a Treaſure, and that the Strength and Riches of a Nation conſiſts in the Numbers of its Inhabitants.

I know, when the late Act of Parliament for Naturalizing Foreign Proteſtants was paſſing, it was a common Objection, and ſome People thought themſelves witty upon the Subject, in ſaying, that all the Beggars of *Europe* would come over hither. —And now they alledge, here is the Experiment made, and that in Time we ſhall drain all *Germany* of their Poor——

I shall meet with all these Objections in my Way as I go on without being oblig'd to form them again, and speak to them in distinct Heads.

To examine, whether this be a Grievance or an Advantage, it will be necessary to enquire,

I. *How the Encrease of People is our Wealth?*
II. *Whether an Addition of POOR People are really Advantagious?*
III. *Whether* England *really wants People or not?*

I. *How the Encrease of People is our Wealth?* —— It is an old and often demonstrated Argument, and I need say but little to it——Every labouring Man is an Encrease to the publick Weath, by how much, what he gains by his Labour, amounts to more than He or his Family eats or consumes——For every Encrease is an Article in the Credit of the General Stock——— And for this Reason, I say, it is an Addition to the publick Wealth to have the Price of Labour dear; *of which hereafter.*

Every labouring Man then, however poor, encreases the publick Wealth——Nor is it enough to say, that the publick Stock is the same; for that what *A.* gains, *B.* pays, and it is still all in the Kingdom, both *A.* and *B.* being Members and Residents of the whole Body———For still the Circulation is the Wealth— And every Body encreases the Value, till the last Consumer pays it—— And this almost in every Article of Trade falls upon Foreign Export; but be it that it were at home, yet the Profit is the same Thing, as it encreases the Value of the Thing, and that encreas'd Value is an Addition to our Wealth; it is an Advance upon the general Valuation of all Things among us, and let it seem to be upon our selves alone, yet it is evident, it is upon every Thing, and must a last affect every Part of Trade——— The Domestick and the Foreign depend upon one another; and let them be what they will, they give new Value to every Thing advanc'd above what it was before, and that Thing so advanc'd will purchase any Thing in the World at the advanc'd Price I speak of, whether there be an intrinsick Value or no.

I think therefore this must be plain, what ever Value we can put upon our Labour, which we can make our Neighbours pay, must be clearly our Gain.

As it is in the Value of Labour, so is it to the Quantity; if the Labour of the Industrious is our Gain, then the more of these industrious People, the more Gain with this one Proviso, that there is Labour enough to employ them; and this is an Enquiry by it self, in examining, which I shall make no Question to prove, that there is no Want of Work in *England* for the Inhabitants, but evidently the contrary.

The Encrease of People is then our Wealth, by the Improvement upon their Labour; but they are profitable another Way still, and that is, as they *make Labour*; for be they never so poor, they must eat, and be cloth'd, and live in Houses——— And this brings in the second Equiry abovementioned.

II. *Whether an Addition of POOR People are really Advantagious?*

Beggary and Sloth, I allow, is bringing in a Disease upon us——And that is not our Case; the Question is, whether an Addition of People be an Advantage to us, tho' they are all POOR. *My Answer is short*, Poor and Industrious *are* Poor, and Slothful or Begging *are not*—Let the Man that labours be never so poor, *he is fed*—— Here is a Help to the Employment of Land for the Produce of Corn and Cattle—*He is cloth'd*: there is the Consumption of the Wool, and the Encrease of Labour; so that be the Man never so poor, he is something, an Encrease to the Consumption, to the Labour, and by Consequence to the Wealth of the Nation.

If we had 100000 of these poor People here, be it that they wrought their own Manufactures, made their own Houshold-Stuff and Clothes—But this is certain, they do not produce the Corn they eat, or the Wool they work with. This is the Produce of the Land, and this is clear Gain to the Publick, because some is consum'd that was not consum'd before— However poor these

People

People may be, if they are but induſtrious, they are your Gain, and muſt be ſo, while you have a Foot of Land uncultivated, or a Pound of Wool unwrought in the whole Nation.

The *laſt* Queſtion is, *Whether* England *really wants People or not?* — And this, I think, will be beſt anſwer'd by another Queſtion; Is there any Land in *England* that is not improv'd to the beſt Advantage? — If you improve Land at all, you muſt have more People to do it with, or elſe you muſt prove, that the Lands in *England* are capable of no farther Employment; which, I believe, no Body will pretend to.

It remains to enquire, In what our Want of People appears, and I hope to make it clear to you all, tho' methinks any that have view'd the Face of *England*, might be able to ſatisfie themſelves — Without my Help — But one ſays, we want no People in our Country; another ſays, we have a great many People in our Country want Employment; a *Yorkſhire* Man ſays, all our People run up to you in the *South* for Want of Employment; a *Colcheſter* Man, or a *Norwich*, or a *Canterbury* Man tells me, we have ſuch a vaſt Number of People with us, that if there be but a little Stop upon Trade, they are ready to eat up one another, and the like.

Let me examine theſe a-part — And firſt I muſt lay it down as a Fundamental, whether in Manufacture or Husbandry, if there is any Land unemploy'd, or any Trade unattempted — It is either Want of People, or Want of Stocks, that is the Occaſion of it; I am loth to put in the Words *Sloth* or *Ignorance*, for it is manifeſt, we do not want Induſtry or Knowledge in Improvement in *England*, if we have either Hands to do it, Stock to compaſs it, or a Proſpect of Advantage by doing it.

Now, have we any Grievance in our Trade at home, but what Encreaſe of People would redreſs? Is your Produce of Corn or Cattle too great? — Tho' that be an abſurd Notion in the main — But is not remedy'd by the Encreaſe of People to conſume it — Is the Quantity of Wool in *Britain* too great? Tho' that is a Complaint equally fooliſh — But it is not for Want of an Encreaſe of People to wear it.

Upon a rational Conjecture I may allow, that every ſingle Perſon living at the common Rate of Plenty in *England*, eſpecially here in the *South*, conſumes in Food two Quarters of Wheat, four Quarters of Barley, five Quarters of Peas or Beans Green, a Bullock, ſix Sheep, two Calves, and a Hog, and a hundred Pound of Butter, or Cheeſe, or Milk, *in a Year*; beſides Fowls, Fiſh, Fruit, and Garden-Stuff.

Now to examine, how much Land the Proportion of this will employ, is pretty difficult to do nicely; but I believe, I ſhall be allow'd not to exceed; if I ſay, the Corn Part, according to a middling Crop, will take up two Acres, the Feeding Part for the Produce of the Cow, at leaſt an Acre, and for the Fleſh, at leaſt two Acres more.

Now, leſt I ſhould be thought to calculate extravagantly upon our Food, as if all *England* liv'd as luxuriantly as we do here in the *South*; or as if the Poor liv'd as plentifully as the Rich, tho' it is manifeſt, our poorer Sort (I don't mean the miſerable Poor) but the working Poor, live in a manner that does not leſſen the Conſumption; for if the Rich, who live in Plenty, eat more Fleſh, Beef, Mutton, Veal, *&c.* the Poor again eat more Milk, Butter, and eſpecially Cheeſe — If the Rich eat more Pies and Puddings, the Poor eat more Bread — If the Rich drinks more Wine, the Poor generally drink more Strong Beer; and the Conſumption of the Produce is not the leſs.

But to avoid all poſſible Cavils at my Calculation, which perhaps I may yet make more exact in my next, I'll take it at near half the Quantity; and caſting the Conſumption of Food, and the Ranks of People into a *Medium*, I believe, whoever knows the Manner of our living in *England* one with another, will allow my Calculation to be modeſt, and rather over than under.

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